

**MINUTES**  
**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission Meeting**  
**FWP Headquarters - Helena, MT**  
**October 11, 2012**

Commission Members Present: Dan Vermillion, Acting Chairman; Ron Moody; Shane Colton; A.T. Stafne

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Staff Present: Joe Maurier, Director and FWP Staff.

Guests: See October 11, 2012 Commission file folder for sign-in sheet.

**Topics of Discussion:**

1. Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Awards Ceremony
3. Approval of Minutes of August 30, 2012 Commission Meeting
4. Approval of Commission Expenses
5. Commission Reports
6. Director's Report
7. Park Fee Rules – Tentative
8. Smith River Rule – Tentative
9. 2013 Fishing Regulations - Final
10. Statewide Fisheries Management Plan – Update
11. Elk Plan Objectives Change – Final
12. Big Lake Acquisition – Final
13. Kootenai Valleys Conservation Easement – Final
14. Spotted Dog Minerals – Final
15. Brucellosis Surveillance and Research Update – Informational
16. Open Microphone – Public Opportunity to Address FWP Issues Not on Agenda

**1. Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance.**

Chairman Vermillion called the meeting to order at 8:29 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Awards Ceremony.**

**FISH AND WILDLIFE DIVISION**

Professional of the Year - Scott Thompson

Leading the 2011-2012 International Sage Grouse Translocation project with Alberta was just a part of the work completed by Scott this past year. In addition, his close work with private landowners, agencies and NGO's has delivered several FWP habitat and access programs that benefit the general public. He also led the development of the Region 6 Upland Game Bird Strategic Plan. Most importantly, Scott assumes a leadership role among staff as a mentor and supporter.

Innovative Thinker Award – Vivaca Crowser

From the unique perspective of a regional FWP spokesperson, Vivaca was one of FWP's leaders in an effort to develop a clear, concise, consistent message on the complex and divisive issue of predator-prey management in Montana. Most importantly she helped FWP staff hear and understand public concerns that some were not aware of. Her ideas and efforts were indispensable in helping FWP develop a clearer message, which helped more Montanans appreciate FWP's approach to wolf management. Vivaca also chaired FWP's committee evaluating social media opportunities, and her administration of social media in Region 2 has reinforced FWP's interest in all wildlife, helping the public see more than just wolves.

Governor's Award Recipients

Special Achievement - Trevor Selch, Earl Radonski, Mike Ruggles, Ken Frazer, Ray Mule, Gary Hammond, Bob Gibson, Jay Watson, Brad Olszewski, Allison Begley, Courtney Tyree, Lee Burroughs, Justin Hawkaluk, John Hunziker, Mike Herman, Matt Ladd, Nick Taylor, Dave Fuller  
In June of 2011 the Exxon-Mobil Silvertip Pipeline ruptured at Laurel MT spilling tens of thousands of gallons of crude oil into the Yellowstone River. This team of dedicated FWP staff spent many very long days, weeks and even months (!) in a variety of trying conditions (climatic, social and political) while diligently representing Montana's fish and wildlife resources and interests during the multi-agency damage assessment and cleanup process, which continues still today.

Special Achievement - Lennie Buhmann, Todd Tryan, Mike Krings, Ryan Karren, Todd Enders  
During the summer months of 2012, two different interview teams travelled out of state to complete several criminal investigations. The first team (Officers Tryan, Krings and Inv. Buhmann) travelled to Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York. They worked five different cases. Team two (Officers Enders, Karren and Inv. Buhmann) – travelled to Wisconsin and Minnesota to work five additional cases. The two teams interviewed over 30 suspects and seized close to 50 illegal mounts/antlers. The two teams issued citations, including restitution that amounted to well over \$100,000.00! Because of the dedicated work of the above individuals several wildlife crimes were solved.

#### PARKS DIVISION

Governor's Award Recipient

Professional of the Year - Chas Van Genderen

Park Administrator Chas Van Genderen is just like the energizer bunny. He is continually on the move and moving the park system forward. A snapshot of the last year in parks reveals a new, popular campground reservation system cost-shared with the State of Idaho to keep it affordable, a partnership with a National Park Unit to produce and sell beef jerky, raising park revenue, marketing park commercials during the Olympics and replacing an entire dysfunctional Park staff at Chief Plenty Coups State Park.

Innovative Thinker Award - Loren Flynn

As Park Manager at Travelers' Rest State Park, Loren has been instrumental in the acquisition of 24 acres of land, and a visitor center, complete with historic artifacts and exhibits. The parcels include riparian habitat along Lolo Creek, and trail linkage through the park connecting trails along Highways 12 & 93. Loren secured Missoula County Open Space Funds and his strong partnership with the Travelers' Rest Preservation & Heritage Association has solidified this project. His innovation in working with a non-profit and bringing forth strong community support is outstanding.

Special Achievement - Ken Soderberg

In 2012, Ken Soderberg played a lead role implementing Montana State Parks first-ever AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps members are now fully integrated into park operations where they are fostering a spirit of community engagement and volunteerism and support priority program areas identified by the Corporation for National and Community Service, including Education, Healthy Futures and the Environment. The benefits of the AmeriCorps program are a direct result of Ken's long term vision and hard work.

#### Finance/Director's Office

Professional of the Year - Hank Worsech

Hank exemplifies public service in his role as the License Bureau Chief for FWP. His ability to calm emotional constituents, explain complex licensing laws and processes, and work effectively with his staff are examples of his leadership, dedication, and loyalty to FWP. His common sense approach to difficult situation is extremely effective. Hank's commitment to his job and to FWP is very much appreciated.

Innovative Thinker Award - Jay Armstrong

Jay successfully integrated the FWIS computer code with an Open Source analysis software called "R". His research, experimentation, and persistence resulted in a product that can take raw data, process it through various population estimation or other statistical analysis methods, and rapidly return accurate results. This innovation saved the agency literally hundreds of hours of IT staff time through not having to code each of the analysis methods individually.

Special Achievement - Marsha Ogle, Lorrie Harris, Neal Whitney, Kathy Reilly, John Brown, Tina Wilson

This group developed and implemented the system that provided earlier notification of Deer and Elk permit drawing results. Earlier notification allowed the recipients more time to plan for the fall hunt and plan for other license applications due in June. The new March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for Deer and Elk permits resulted in more individuals applying for permits, balanced workloads in the regional offices, and one application date for nonresident licenses and deer and elk permits.

#### FWP EMPLOYEES NOMINATED OUTSIDE OF FWP

Interagency Grants Management Team – GOVERNOR'S AWARD - Walt Timmerman and Beth Shumate

This dedicated multi-agency team developed and implemented an enterprise-wide, web-based grants and loan management system to provide citizen access to funding opportunities offered by four agencies. The system also automates cumbersome paper processes and lowers costs to the agencies and applicants. An interagency user group with members from the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, DNRC and FWP continues to collaborate and support each other in moving more grant programs to the system.

### **3. Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes of August 30, 2012.**

*Action: Commissioner Colton moved and Commissioner Moody seconded the motion to approve the August 30, 2012 minutes. Motion carried.*

### **4. Approval of Commission Expenses**

*Action: Commissioner Colton moved and Commissioner Moody seconded the motion to approve the Commission expenses. Motion carried.*

## **5. Commission Reports.**

Commissioner Stafne had no report.

Commissioner Moody reported Central Montana is bone dry and a lot of Block Management areas were closed up until this weekend when it rained. Hunters are going to play catch up fairly quickly after a month off due to the weather.

Commissioner Colton commended Region 5 for the Governor's Award, was very well deserved. Personally watched the employees work very hard and many hours; very instrumental in inventory and what may have been lost in regard to wildlife and aquatic life as a result of the spill. Drove around the Beckman Wildlife Management Area with Commissioner Vermillion over the weekend; it is very special and likes what it has become. Since his time on the Commission, a lot of wildlife areas have been put together and any time he hears criticism it angers him because the work that has gone into something that special that will be around forever and protected. People are hunting, camping and plenty of wildlife; won't be long until elk will migrate there. Hopes people recognize how hard FWP employees work and what that accomplishes at the end of the day.

Commissioner Vermillion reported the rain helped the Pine Creek Fire that hit in late August. Very lucky, burnt 6,000-7,000 acres, could have been a lot worse. The creeks are too low and feels the spawn this year will not be very successful. Heard a lot comments from the public was appreciative to the Department about the wolf trapping classes, a lot to demand in Livingston, Bozeman and Billings. People that have attended the classes commented of coming away with a better understanding of the complexity of wolf management and the benefits and the detriments that wolves present on the landscape. Went Hunting around Denton and the Beckman Wildlife Management Area last weekend, in some areas, the bird numbers were down. One thing was apparent and the farmers are relaying is the number of hunters back in that area of the state and the economical impact it is having. A good example of how the Department, hunters and landowners work together, it is great to see. Echoed Commissioner Colton's comments on Region 5 and the different awards that were given. Has a lot of respect for the Department, its employees and the legacy they leave behind for generations to come, it is something they should be proud of.

## **6. Director's Report**

Congratulated Commissioner Stafne on his 53<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary and the awardees for their hard work. Thanked Ellen Bryson for the work she did putting together the awards ceremony and banquet that was held at Montana Wild Center. The Montana Wild Center's grand opening was held September 28. It looks great. Had a lot of local community leaders and people involved and everyone was impressed with the center. Amazing how many people, especially school groups use the center.

Commissioner Moody responded the word is leaking out about the center. You can expect more school groups to visit.

Commissioner Vermillion commented that Livingston teachers are definitely talking about a visit to the center.

## **7. Smith River Rule – Tentative**

Chas Van Genderen, FWP Parks Administrator reported the Smith River State Park and River Corridor Biennial Rule establishes fees, permit requirements and associated rules for private, commercial and landowner float trips on the Smith River from Camp Baker to Eden Bridge. The Smith River Rule also enables the Department to implement the management direction provided in the Smith River State Park and River Corridor Recreation Management Plan (updated in 2009). The Parks Division has prepared a draft biennial rule for consideration by the Commission. The majority of edits/changes to the rule are grammatical to improve consistency and understanding of terminology, a new section that specifies the rules for the Super Permit Lottery, a variety of grammatical edits to improve consistency and understanding, reference to new authorized outfitter Erik Hess, Missoula Fishing Company who bought out High Plains Drifter in 2012.

*Action: Commissioner Colton moved and Commissioner Moody seconded the Commission approve the tentative Smith River State Park and River Corridor Biennial Rule pending public comment.*

Commissioner Moody asked what the flow year was like during the drought year and has the rule changes made previously to adjust the lead time for making reservation on the river by outfitters worked this season.

Colin Maas, Smith River Park Manager responded in light of the drought this summer, the Little Belt Mountain Range was average for snow pack. A little below normal but close to average. The rule changes that were made for the outfitters worked fine this year and the comments received were positive.

Commissioner Vermillion asked Maas about Hound Creek and if it has dried up?

Maas responded he is not aware of Hound Creek drying up. Was up there a couple weeks ago and it was fine.

Commissioner Vermillion asked for public comment.

*Motion carried.*

#### **8. 2013 Fishing Regulations – Final**

Bruce Rich, FWP Fisheries Bureau Chief reported on August 2, the Commission approved tentative changes for the 2013 Fishing Regulations: Bitterroot River (Western District): Extend a harvest section of the river to include Woodside FAS; Clearwater River (Western District): Change regulations to reflect removal of Lake Inez fish barrier; Elk Lake (Central District): Expand catch and release regulation to include grayling; Red Rock Creek (Central District): Expand cutthroat trout harvest opportunities to protect grayling; Upper Red Rock Lake (Central District): Establish new regulations to allow harvest of cutthroat trout and catch and release angling for grayling; Widgeon Pond (Central District): Expand cutthroat trout harvest opportunities to protect grayling; Yellowstone River from YNP to Billings (Central District): Eliminate exception that allows two lines with two hooks per line all year from the mouth of the Clark Fork River to I-90 Bridge at Billings; Fort Peck Reservation - Tribal Boundary Water Regulations (Eastern District): Change catfish harvest regulation in response to Fort Peck tribal staff interest in consistency with tribal fishing regulations and State of Montana regulations. Received five public comments; three of which didn't pertain to the proposed changes but will be considered at a future time. Opposition to the proposed changes was minimal (two comments). The proposed change for the Bitterroot River would have minimal impact on catch-and-release angling. The catch-and-release section of the river would only be shortened by several hundred feet; there would still be nearly 30 miles of catch-and-release angling. The change would benefit the public that wants to harvest fish from the bank at Woodside FAS (currently not allowed). The change from two to one line on the Yellowstone River (YNP to Billings) would simplify the regulations and minimally impact angling opportunity; anglers would still be allowed to fish with six lines immediately downstream from this area. Rich asked to defer the Red Rock Creek, Upper Red Rock Lake and Widgeon Pond regulations until further clarifications can be done.

*Action: Commissioner Colton moved and Commissioner Moody seconded to adopt FWP's proposed final regulation changes for the 2013 fishing season with the exception of Red Rock Creek, Upper Red Rock Lake and Pidgeon Pond.*

Commissioner Vermillion asked for public comment.

Commissioner Moody asked what the intentions are for the three deferred regulations and will they be included with the 2013 fishing regulations.

Rich explained there will be a recommendation for the Commission; however, more clarification is required before the three can be finalized.

Commissioner Vermillion responded he understands the primary issue with Red Rocks is the potential impact on other endangered species on other Red Rocks lakes. Would like the Department to aggressively work with the Fish and Wildlife Service to get the impact addressed and keep the regulations on track to keep a positive effect on grayling in these areas. Willing to defer changes until the November meeting.

Rich responded the Department is presently in contact and working with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Commissioner Vermillion asked for public comment from the regions.

*Motion carried.*

#### **9. Statewide Fisheries Management Plan – Update**

Bruce Rich, FWP Fisheries Bureau Chief reported the public comment period was to end October 2, 2012, because some public input received at public meetings; the comment period has been extended another two weeks. Held nine public meetings around the state with an average of 55 people at each meeting; received 24 comments and anticipated more by the deadline. Request for final proposal will be held at December's Commission meeting.

#### **10. Elk Plan Objectives Change – Final**

George Pauley, FWP Wild Management Section Chief, reported the Commissioner's approval on August 2 of the proposed elk objective change. The public comment period was initiated at that time and remained open through September 17. Received 11 comments, with support strongly represented. Opposing comments included references to game damage and limited access to private lands. By defining objectives for the three herd units in HD 283 as proposed, will be able to manage individual elk herd units more or less conservatively based upon individual herd size and trend.

*Action: Commissioner Colton moved and Commissioner Vermillion seconded the Commission adopt the proposed 2012 elk objective adjustment as presented by the Department.*

*Motion carried.*

#### **11. Wolf Trapping Regulations – Proposal**

George Pauley, FWP Wild Management Section Chief explained the Commission finalized regulations for the first Montana wolf trapping season at the July 2012 meeting. The trapping season framework included a variety of restrictions, some of which were intended to minimize the take of non-target species. Montana trappers are required to complete a training course which includes material detailing various measures to minimize capture of non-target species. The measures includes FWP's proposed a recommendation requiring trappers to set wolf trap pan tensions to a minimum of eight pounds. This is a particularly effective approach that would minimize non-target captures, particularly of smaller carnivores including lynx, marten, and fisher. The primary non-target concern is lynx, which is a federally listed species. The Department proposes adopting this restriction in trap District one and two that includes Federally identified lynx habitat.

*Action: Commissioner Colton moved and Commissioner Moody seconded the Commission accept the wolf trapping regulations as recommended by the Department.*

Commissioner Colton applauded the Department for being responsive and how much the Department pays attention and care is taken when developing a new program.

Commissioner Moody asked when the regulation is this deep into the activity, if people where not complying, how would we know?

Pauley explained it is a challenging regulation to enforce but it is enforceable.

Commissioner Vermillion asked for public comment.

Kim Beam, Wolves of the Rockies, recognizes the intent of the Commission is to reduce the number of deaths of non-target species, what she doesn't understand is why regulating tension on traps only during wolf season is going to minimize the collateral damage and how will it be enforced.

Marc Cook, Wolves of the Rockies, said the pan tension requirement is challenging and questions how it will be enforced. Asked for an increase in pan tension to ten pounds or more and traps be tested at FWP Regional Headquarters.

Commissioner Moody stated we have reached a point in the wolf harvest regulation saga where it needs to be grounded and trust enforcement based on experience and not on prediction. The Department and the Commission are committed to staying on top of this.

Pauley noted that the final regulation will be brought to the November 8 meeting. Spoke with the Montana Trapper's Association and at trapping education classes; little opposition and some support was given.

*Motion carried.*

Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Bureau Chief stated 25 of the 35 wolf trapping education classes have been completed with 1,376 participants - anticipate 2,500 individuals once all the classes are completed.

#### **12. Big Lake Acquisition – Final**

Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Bureau Chief explained the Department is asking the Commission to acquire, in fee title, approximately 1,282 acres of land adjacent to the east boundary of Big Lake Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Big Lake WMA consists of 2,060 acres located in Stillwater County approximately 23 miles northwest of Billings. The WMA is managed for waterfowl and upland game bird production. Recreational opportunities on Big Lake WMA include hunting for upland birds, waterfowl in wet years, mule deer, antelope, as well as bird watching, wildlife viewing and photography. Most of the west shore of Big Lake is currently owned by FWP, while the east shore is mostly in private ownership. The legal boundary runs through the lake bed making it unfeasible to fence neighboring cattle out of the WMA. Land management activities on the east shore may pose a threat to the habitat quality and recreational opportunities present on Big Lake WMA. FWP and the owners of parcels 1a and 1b have entered into a purchase agreement on roughly 1,110 acres in the amount of approximately \$277,612. Funding will come from the Migratory Bird Stamp Program. FWP will continue to pursue the acquisition of approximately 172 acres in Parcels 2 (~168 acres) and 3 (~4 acres). An EA was prepared and released on August 6, with the public comment period running through August 31. A public meeting was held in Billings on August 16. Three written comments received, two supported the proposed action, and one comment from the State Historic Preservation Board reminded FWP to consider any cultural/historic features that may be on the property. At the public meeting, four people offered comments, all of which were in favor of the proposed action.

*Action: Commissioner Colton moved and Commissioner Moody seconded the Commission approve the Department's recommendation to purchase in fee title approximately 1,110 acres adjacent to the east boundary of Big Lake WMA.*

Commissioner Vermillion asked for public comment.

Commissioner Vermillion stated this is a very exciting project. This shows the value of public ownership of lands, this will provide exceptional recreational land to the residents of Billings. Kudos to the Department for working with the landowners.

*Motion carried.*

### **13. Kootenai Valleys Conservation Easement – Final**

Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Bureau Chief clarified this easement was originally named Stimson Lumber Conservation Easement. FWP proposes to purchase one or more conservation easements to protect about 28,000 acres of timberland and fish and wildlife habitat in northwestern Montana. The property is owned and managed by Stimson Lumber Company and Trust for Public Land is the conservation partner. The appraised value of the easement is \$17.6 million. Stimson is willing to sell the easement at 28 percent below market value, or for about \$12.76 million. The bargain-sale portion, and a \$100,000 cash contribution by TPL, would provide the match to federal grants, the remaining funds would come from Forest Legacy and Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Program grants. The cost estimate changed from the Environmental Assessment (EA) and decision notice due to FWP's ability to fund the project with available HCP grants rather than BPA funding, which would have delayed the project by six months or more. Stimson agreed to the purchase price, which required more match and a larger donation. FWP conducted outreach in summer/fall 2011 that included meetings with the Lincoln County Commission and Planning Board and open houses in Libby and Troy in October 2011. The meetings were well attended; the public was generally supportive, but requested more information. On August 2, FWP released the draft EA that also included the proposed conservation easement and management plan for 30-day public review. Met with the Lincoln County Planning Board on August 21 and then held a formal public hearing in Troy on August 22. Received a total of 18 public comments all but one were strongly in favor of the proposed action noting that the project would help maintain working forests, public recreational access, fish and wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors, water quality, and communities. The one letter of concern suggested that the draft EA and conservation easement language inadequately addressed existing rights of third parties for mineral development. FWP responded to the concern in the decision notice and altered the language in one of the conservation easement recitals.

*Action: Commissioner Moody moved and Commissioner Vermillion seconded that the Commission approve the acquisition of the proposed conservation easement or easements on the approximately 28,000-acre Stimson property, as described in the Department's decision notice of September 13, 2012.*

Commissioner Vermillion commented this is going to secure public access to hunters of Northwestern Montana. Public acquisition of land and conservation easements is important for Montana sportsmen and hope they recognize the good work that is being done by the Department and Administration.

McDonald stated that several access points are adjoined to the National Forest land.

*Motion carried.*

#### **14. Spotted Dog Minerals – Final**

Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Bureau Chief explained the Department proposes to spend \$70,745 of Habitat Montana funding to purchase the mineral rights that are held by the Pauly Family on 14,149 acres within FWP's recently acquired 37,877-acre Spotted Dog WMA. In the 2010 acquisition from the Rock Creek Cattle Company, FWP received nearly all the mineral rights to 10,408 acres and 50% of the mineral rights, the other 50% interest in the mineral rights is owned by the Pauly family, and that 50% is now proposed for purchase by FWP. DNRC owns the oil, gas, and coal rights to 2,419 acres within the family's subsurface interest and 640 acres under FWP fee title portion of the WMA. The Federal Government retained the subsurface rights to the remaining 5,307 acres. A Draft EA was completed for the proposed Mineral Rights Acquisition and released for public comment on July 5; it was available through August 3. Nine emailed or phoned comments were received. Six of the nine comments specifically supported the mineral rights acquisition. One of the nine comments did not specifically support or oppose the acquisition, two comments opposed stated the money could and should be better spent. Acquiring subsurface rights to protect and conserve the surface as wildlife habitat and a recreational resource, and limit any future surface removal by another party. Failure to acquire these rights would leave the Spotted Dog WMA and the Department investments potentially vulnerable to the independent objectives and direction of the holder of the mineral rights.

*Action: Commissioner Moody moved and Commissioner Vermillion seconded the Commission approve the Department's proposal to complete the purchase of the Spotted Dog WMA mineral rights as proposed.*

Rod Bullis asks the Department to support this. It clears up the ownership and who would have the management decision.

*Motion carried.*

McDonald stated the Department is surveying and began fencing Spotted Dog. Pursuing a land exchange with the Forest Service on the eastern boundary, it will be easier for both departments to manage.

Commissioner Moody asked what account pays for fencing.

McDonald answered the Department has an operations/maintenance account for this.

Commissioner Moody asked why the necessary capitol improvement of fencing was not factored in the original purchasing price and why the work hasn't been done.

McDonald explained work is being done; it took a better part of a year for a survey to be completed, this summer around 23 miles of fencing was constructed. With this WMA, its primary purpose is big game wintering range and closed from December – April, along with spring weather conditions, the construction time is pretty limited.

Maurier explained originally we had hoped to fence this as soon as possible but what has to be realized is there is one adjoining ranch that has an easement through the property to get to the National Forest grazing allotments, which we are receiving \$15 – 20 an AUM until we can actually secure the border.

#### **15. Brucellosis Surveillance and Research Update – Informational**

Quentin Kujala, FWP Wildlife Management Section Chief explained on August 30 the Commission was presented with its first background session on the working group and its proposed recommendations and today will receive additional background information on surveillance and research relative to brucellosis. While the working group meetings were announced and open to the public there's been relatively little public comment and will have the opportunity to comment at the November meeting and during the subsequent comment period. Any final Commission adoption would likely take place in early 2013 after the public comment period closes and comments have been presented to the Commission. At the November 8 meeting, the Department will deliver a detailed presentation on the working group's process and results for the FWP Commission's first formal decision action on this topic.

Neal Anderson, FWP Lab Supervisor gave a lengthy discussion on the history and current presence of brucellosis, study areas and methods along with testing. (See Power Point CD for full presentation.)

Commissioner Moody asked if the States or at the Federal level has seriously discussed an interstate compact or an equivalent thereof to establish uniform brucellosis incidents?

Anderson replied no there is an interest, but there are philosophical differences between the states and that has to be worked out first.

Kujala explained depending who is in the discussion, the answer to the agreement is based on what management action is being talked about.

Kelly Proffitt, FWP Wildlife Biologist, gave a presentation on Elk movements and Brucellosis Transmission Risk. (See Power Point CD for full presentation.)

Commissioner Moody asked if the brucellosis working group can solve the problem of elk harboring and population size.

Commissioner Vermillion explained one of the primary recommendations of the working group was to address elk distribution in each particular drainage rather than taking a global perspective, working on the local level, with landowners and sportsman specifically to distribute elk across the landscape during the transmission period.

Kujala thanked the staff for all the hard work. Explained at the November 8 meeting, the Department will deliver a detailed presentation on the working group's process and results for the FWP Commission's first formal decision action on this topic.

Commissioner Moody said we are investing a lot of time, energy, talent and sportsman license dollars in this matter. Are we actually trying to solve the problem?

Kujala stated the way to look at it is in its context to the other alternatives, which you will see in November.

Rick Douglas, working group member, explained how complex the brucellosis issue is.

Joe Cohenour, working group member gave a brief discussion on what the working group has been doing.

Jim Bailey, Gallatin Wildlife Association, asked does our habitat management practices on WMAs, influence the concentration and/or the dispersal of wintering elk during the risk period. Feels this issue deserves some attention in the future.

#### **16. Open Microphone – Public Opportunity to Address FWP Issues Not on Agenda**

Rob Bullis stated his concerns on the application proposal for domestic livestock grazing on the Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area that is coming in the future.

Marc Cooke, Wolves of the Rockies expressed concern about FWP relinquishing control to US Wildlife Services and is not the way to go, encourages the Commission not to support that protocol.

Jim Bailey, Gallatin Wildlife Association requests to put on agenda a revision of the Habitat Montana policy on how wildlife management areas are managed.

*Action: Commissioner Colton moved and Commissioner Moody seconded the motion to adjourn.*

The meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

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Bob Ream, Chairman

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Joe Maurier, Director